

The risk of job exclusion after childbirth

Il rischio di lasciare o perdere il lavoro in seguito alla maternità

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Riassunto: Dai risultati dell'indagine campionaria sulle nascite condotta dall'Istat nel 2005 emerge che il 18,4% delle madri occupate all'inizio della gravidanza non lavora più al momento dell'intervista. In particolare, il 5,6% ha perso il lavoro mentre il 12,4% si è licenziata. Approfondendo le determinanti che incidono sul rischio di ritrovarsi in una condizione non lavorativa, verrà utilizzato un modello di regressione logistica. Le variabili esplicative considerate sono relative alle caratteristiche della madre e del suo compagno e all'organizzazione del lavoro domestico e di cura. Attraverso un modello di regressione multipla, si tenterà, inoltre, di focalizzare l'attenzione sulle donne che non lavorano distinguendo tra: chi non lavorava né al momento della gravidanza né all'intervista, chi ha lasciato volontariamente il lavoro e chi l'ha invece perso.

Keywords: childbirth, mothers' participation to labour market, compatibility between family and work

1. Introduction

The balance between work and family should allow the women, and the couples, to be perfectly able to make choice on the basis of their expectations and life projects without postponing one choice to the other. Based on the results from Istat Birth Sample Survey (2005), choosing right between childbearing and job often seems only to be theoretical, especially for women with little children. In fact, about 18% of mothers employed at the beginning of their pregnancy do not work anymore in the survey period. About one third of them was fired or lost their job (e.g., many of them have a temporary position). The other mothers left their job because of irreconcilable working hours with the new household duties or to full-time dedicate themselves to the family.

2. Aims, data and methodology

The aim of this paper is to analyse factors influencing the new mothers' unemployment risk after delivery. Individual data were provided by the *Italian Birth Sample Survey*. This survey was carried out for the first time in 2002 and for the second time in 2005. In this paper we focus on the 2005 edition. The sample consists of around 50,000 births enrolled at the Population Registers in 2003, representing around 10% of the total resident births registered. Mothers were interviewed through C.A.T.I. (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) technique about 18-21 months after delivery. The data collection was based on two questionnaires, a short-form and a long-form (Istat, 2006b); the former was given to the entire sample, whereas the latter only to one third of the

sample. In the 2005 edition some key variables on job are available for all the mothers in the sample, while in the first edition these variables were available only in the long-form questionnaire. In order to point out the factors influencing the job exclusion risk of new mothers after delivery, a logistic model was applied to estimate the probability to not have a job. The dependent variable indicates whether the woman does not belong to the labour force either as employed or unemployed. We regarded as covariates both mother's features, the spouse/live-in partner characteristics (if existing), the division of childcare activities within the household, including external help from e.g., grandparents, as well as the use of child care services. Moreover, focusing on job exclusion, a multinomial logistic regression estimated the probability of leaving the job after childbirth as a voluntary choice of the mother. The dependent variable distinguished among (i) unemployed women at the beginning of pregnancy and in the survey period, (ii) women who voluntarily decided to leave their job after childbirth, and (iii) women who lost their job. The analysis on 2005 results is still in progress. However some findings of 2002 edition data analysis can be pointed out. The level of education proves to be an important factor for entering the labour market; for mother with a university degree the chance of being employed raises of about 7 per cent compared to mothers who did not get to the high school. Mothers without grandparents helping in childcare or benefiting from childcare have an unemployment risk of about 76 per cent; at the opposite, only about 6,6 per cent of mothers with external help were unemployed after 18 months after childbirth. (Neri A., Lo Conte M., Casadio P., 2004).

3. Conclusions

The *Italian Birth Sample Survey* represents a reference source for studying the interaction between maternity and mothers' participation to labour market, compatibility between family and work and lack of facilities for children. These information are relevant both to understand the recent Italian fertility dynamics and to individuate suitable policy measures for helping families (Cnel, 2003; Istat, 2006a; Istat, 2007).

The unemployment and resignation risks vary according to a set of key factors needing further analyses. In this framework the care-giving system plays an important role. Job attachment seems to be strictly connected with other variables such as the human capital variables and the age.

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